



Enhanced Pay for Election Workers Act

Background

Election workers are [chronically underpaid](#), and States lack the resources to meaningfully increase pay for their election workers statewide. Additionally, a majority of election workers in the United States are [older Americans](#) and enhanced pay for election workers can open up avenues for improved recruitment of younger employees—critical for the longevity of our elections system.

Further, according to a recent Brennan Center for Justice [survey](#), 30 percent of election workers polled know of one or more colleagues who have left their job at least in part because of fear for their safety, increased threats, or intimidation. Further, 60 percent of officials are concerned that threats, harassment, and intimidation against local election officials will make it difficult to retain and recruit election workers.

Bill Summary

The Enhanced Pay for Election Workers Act proposes a new grant program to provide States with the funding to increase pay for their election workers. Election workers include individuals serving as election officials or poll workers on a temporary or unpaid basis. The program would be administered by the Election Assistance Commission (EAC).

How the Program Works

The bill stipulates that the EAC must establish and operate a program through which it awards grants to eligible States for providing enhanced pay for election workers. States will receive a grant based on either 1) the reasonable costs incurred to implement their proposed pay increases or 2) a minimum payment amount equal to one-half of 1 percent of the aggregate amount made available during the given fiscal year. This will ensure that all States who apply for the program will receive some level of funding.

To receive a grant, States would submit applications to the EAC and propose a system for providing State election workers with pay raises. States are forbidden from rendering workers ineligible to receive enhanced pay solely because the individual does not interact directly with voters.

Background on Elections Grant Programs

Congress first authorized federal grant programs for elections in the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002, which was enacted in response to election administration issues during the 2000 elections. These grant programs are intended to support state-level improvements to elections processes. HAVA authorized two long-term programs for States: a general improvements program and a requirements program. The CARES Act also included election administration grants which enabled States to implement public health measures for the 2020 election. All programs are administered by the EAC. The Enhanced Pay for Election Workers Act would establish a new grant program under HAVA.